

Resolutions for Everyone, Every Day

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It is important to remember the individual and family lifecycle. Instead of a still photograph of society, think of moving pictures. At the turn of the year I was reviewing a novel. A frozen image could not show the ups and downs of life, including household formation, deformation and reformation.

Locally, many people live in their home for decades, mostly by choice. That still leaves the challenge of how others find lodging, affordable flat shares, first homes and then perhaps space to house a family. At the other end of life, the elderly should have better options for supported living or an appropriate residential home.

The charity activists with whom I campaign for fairer residential leaseholders have also fought for better retirement, against exploitation or casual disregard of pensioners in some retirement homes.

To mark a wedding anniversary, Virginia suggested we meet people who help me to care for constituents. It was good to have coffee with a couple we have known for over twenty years. Their activities have included running a valued greengrocers and fishmongers, in addition to supporting some of us along our street. I cherish the bale of hay they gave to animals in need rather than chocolates for us.

Then we talked with a community activist who extended public service given in a police career by offering to serve as a councillor. People who are really plugged into their local area help me to help others around them.

Entrepreneurs and risk-takers invest much in our villages and towns. Look around our industrial estates for evidence. In addition, think of the hospitality venues that revive and transform our lives. We invited old friends and political companions to join us for a jolly lunch at the Perch on the Pier.

Like the Brewhouse & Kitchen on Wykeham Road, the major investment on the pier results in better jobs, admirable food and service, with training and work opportunities for all. I am sad when a loved pub closes or when a service business is hit by the recent extraordinary rise in energy costs.

My resolution is to be a bridge between constituency interests and public authorities or government. When an issue is out of the news, I may be beavering away with specialists, anticipating problems that will soon become headline news.

When another problem is dominating headlines, I try to see beyond the obvious to work for resolution of difficulty or at least reduction of harm.

One of my long-term concerns at Westminster has been the consequences of longevity, considering how to use the talents of the growing number of the elderly, and how to meet the needs of the lonely and isolated.

When I was young, it was common to find a great aunt or grandparent absorbed into a household. That continues but a larger number are alone, at risk of falling without access to effective help.

When parliament meets again, we need to debate how to agree that successive waves of strikes are not in the general interest and are usually not in the real interest of each group involved. We need each other, at home and at work.

I will take to work the continuing threats to our green fields and open spaces, together with the need to recognise the real causes of pressures on every part of our social care and our health services. There are ways forward that engage the commitment and the dedication of staff, preferably with evolution rather than revolution.

As soon as possible, we need the standard of living of clinicians and their support colleagues to rise without a wage-price spiral that hits the vulnerable and those without bargaining power. We must review systems of income support that recognise the variations in circumstances. Be resolute; be caring; look long-term.